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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001445

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - ASWJ LEADERS PROVIDE MILITARY COMMAND
STRUCTURE

REF: NAIROBI 1297

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson for reasons 1.4(b)
and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C//NF) Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma (ASWJ) signatories to the TFG-ARS declaration of cooperation, in response to our June 23 request (reftel), provided the Somalia Unit with information about ASWJ military command structure and force strength. Operational ASWJ forces are largely limited to central Somalia, where they enjoy community support. ASWJ field commanders and supporters are putting increasing pressure on ASWJ political leaders to show dividends of the TFG-ASWJ agreement. ASWJ commanders asked for immediate U.S. support to confront al-Shabaab in the strategic town of El Bur. We are urging the TFG to quickly share money and materiel with the ASWJ. End Summary.

ASWJ Command Structure

¶2. (C//NF) On July 6, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma (ASWJ) signatories of the June 21 TFG-ARS declaration of cooperation Mahad Ali and Abdisamad Sheikh Mohamud provided the Somalia Unit with the military command structure and names of its active forces in Galgaduud. (The ASWJ representatives had promised to provide this information in a June 23 meeting with emboffs (reftel)). The command structure included a central commander for Galgaduud, his second in command, and five additional commanders for logistics, training, administration, transportation, and intelligence. Additionally, five towns in Galgaduud each have a commander and deputy commander. Ali and Mohamud said the ASWJ command structure in Galgaduud is replicated across 9 additional regions, although at the moment its approximately 6,000 fighters are only mobilized in Galgaduud, Mudug, and parts of Hiraan. (Note: In clan terms the ASWJ fighters in these areas are largely drawn from a Hawiye/Habr Gedir subclan alliance among the Ayr, Suliman, and Sa'ad.)

¶3. (C//NF) Ali and Mohamud did not produce names of commanders in regions other than Galgaduud, as those commanders were not yet "active." They said it is dangerous for other commanders to come forward. (Comment: While we do not doubt that ASWJ, broadly understood as a Sufi affiliation, may be able to count among its "membership" the

majority of all Somalis and may have the ability to work with local clan elders and militia in other regions, we have seen little evidence to suggest well-formed ASWJ military command structures are in place and operational outside of central Somalia.)

Commanders Depend on Local Support

¶4. (C//NF) Ali and Mohamud said ASWJ depends on support from local communities. They said ASWJ has no guns of its own and only gains men and weapons through the participation of clan militia and guns captured from the al-Shabaab after fighting. They told us that only about one-third of their claimed 6,000 fighters have weapons and these troops are spread across central Somalia. Furthermore, a lack of transport hinders ASWJ's mobility and reinforcement during fighting.

Increasing Pressure from Field Commanders

¶5. (C//NF) Ali and Mohamud stressed they are under increasing pressure from ASWJ fighters in central Somalia to justify the June 21 agreement with the TFG. They will lose credibility if the TFG does not come through on its pledge to provide salaries, arms, and ammunition to ASWJ forces. Ali and Mohamud said the TFG has so far provided nothing by way of emergency provisions and also complained that AMISOM has yet to release funds to the ASWJ. ASWJ field commanders are

NAIROBI 00001445 002 OF 002

asking them why ASWJ leaders are spending time in Nairobi with internationals and the TFG rather than raising funds from the diaspora.

Ready to Move on El Bur

¶6. (C//NF) Again stressing the need for the quick provision of funds and support, Ali and Mohamud said ASWJ commanders would use the funds to take the strategic town of El Bur while al-Shabaab is focused on Mogadishu. (Note: El Bur is a reportedly a transit point for al-Shabaab supplies. End Note) ASWJ has fighters 32 kilometers away from the town who are reportedly ready to launch an attack, the two said. In our previous meetings, the ASWJ has stated that, if it received support from the TFG or the international community, it would be able to move on El Bur within 48 hours.

Comment

¶7. (C//NF) Ali and Mohamud contradicted themselves at times, alternately stating that fighters in Galgaduud are mobilized from local communities and mostly unarmed and ensuring us all fighters in Galgaduud reside in camps clearly under ASWJ command and control. These inconsistencies likely reflect ASWJ efforts to be transparent while presenting themselves as a more organized fighting force than they are. With its ideological orientation and adherents across central Somalia, its leaders likely are able to liaise with and mobilize clan-based militia as they have done in battlefield successes in Galgaduud over recent months. We are urging the TFG to support ASWJ efforts in Galgaduud through the timely release of ASWJ salaries and military support. TFG-ASWJ coordination will most likely assist the ASWJ in pushing back against al-Shabaab in the region. And, the potential perception of greater TFG cooperation with local administrations may provide the TFG with greater credibility on the ground. End Comment.
SLUTZ